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the common ejaculation that his fellows use in the play as Christ enters the gates of hell. *Aroust* does not occur in the Dictionary, except as pp. of *arecche*, to explain.

But to note a few other words. Under *Bad* we find that the editor prefers the etymology suggested, "with great probability," by Prof. Zupitza—who sees in M. E. *badde* the O. E. *baeddel*, hermaphrodite, with *l* dropped, as in *muchel*, from O. E. *mycel*—to that suggested by Sarrazin from *gebæded*, forced, oppressed. He says: "No other suggestion yet offered is of any importance; the Celtic words sometimes compared are out of the question." So, too, under *Basket*, which has long been derived from a Celtic *basgawd*, and identified with Latin *bascauda*, used by Juvenal and Martial, he says, on the authority of Prof. Rhys, that "*basgawd* is a figment invented to suggest *bascauda*," and that the modern Celtic words "cannot phonetically be descended from an original *bascauda*, but seem to be simply adopted from English. At present, therefore, there is no evidence to connect *basket* with *bascauda*, or to refer it to a Celtic origin." Much other interesting information may be gained from a study of this Dictionary, but I can only commend it to scholars and the public generally, and express the hope that the successive parts may appear at less prolonged intervals.¹

JAMES M. GARNETT.

Anglo-Saxon Reading Primers: I. Selected Homilies of Aelfric. II. Extracts from Alfred's Orosius. Edited by HENRY SWEET, M. A. Oxford. At the Clarendon Press, 1885.

The titles of these two little volumes explain themselves. The series is intended, as Mr. Sweet says, "to give extracts from the more important works of Old English literature in a convenient and easily accessible form, and in a moderate compass. The want of such a series has often been felt by students who have worked through my Anglo-Saxon Primer and Reader, and are at a loss for further reading." The trouble at most colleges in this country is to induce students to study Anglo-Saxon long enough to work through Mr. Sweet's Reader, but for those who have accomplished this, these Primers supply very useful selections. The first volume consists of ten Homilies of Aelfric (74 pages), with a brief glossary (6 pages), and the second of twenty-two selections from Alfred's Orosius (72 pages), with the Latin original of a few, three pages of explanatory notes, and four pages of glossary.

The first are taken from the Cambridge MS, printed by Thorpe, and the second from the Lauderdale MS, which, with the Cotton MS, is contained in Mr. Sweet's edition of Orosius for the E. E. T. Society. The glossaries are the briefest possible. It is gratifying to know that there is a demand for Anglo-Saxon prose texts for translation by students, and Mr. Sweet's two little volumes, in their cheap and convenient form, are well suited to supply it. We cannot be sufficiently grateful to the delegates of the Clarendon Press for their continued zeal in the promotion of English studies by the publication of Old and Middle English works for the use of students. I desire, however, to renew a suggestion made in this Journal (VI 355) that Mr. Sweet's Anglo-

¹ Reference may be made to the notices of Part I in *Anglia*, Anz. VII 1, and Anz. VIII 8, and *Englische Studien*, VIII 120, and of Part II in *Englische Studien*, IX 466.

Saxon Reader should be revised on the lines of Sievers's Anglo-Saxon Grammar, and that the two parts of Morris and Skeat's Specimens of Early English should be compressed into one smaller work, with the prominent features of the three Middle English dialects prefixed, as this would save to teachers and pupils both time and expense. If to this should be added a brief history of the English language, which Dr. Morris has long promised, teachers of higher English would be well supplied with text-books.

JAMES M. GARNETT.

York Plays: The Plays Performed by the Crafts, or Mysteries of York, on the Day of Corpus Christi in the Fourteenth, Fifteenth, and Sixteenth Centuries. Now First Printed from the Unique Manuscript in the Library of Lord Ashburnham. Edited, with Introduction and Glossary, by LUCY TOULMIN SMITH. Oxford, At the Clarendon Press, 1885. lxxviii, 528 pp.

The addition of a fourth to the three previously published series of Mystery Plays is an event for which we have great reason to be thankful, especially when, as in the present instance, the series is more extensive and important than any heretofore printed. The existence of this manuscript has been long known, but no one seems ever to have made a thorough examination of it. This has at last been done, and the MS made accessible to the general public, by Miss Lucy Toulmin Smith, already well known from her studies of other English works. She has prefixed an introduction, with appendices, treating of the pedigree, description, and date of the manuscript, of other plays represented at York—such as the play of the Lord's Prayer and the Creed Play, both of which are unfortunately lost—the pageants and the pageant-houses, players, and expenses of the plays; also the comparative literature, date of composition, authorship, sources, verse and style, with sketch-analysis of the metres, language, and general remarks.

The appendices comprise a very useful comparative table of English cycles of religious plays, in which the York Plays (48), Towneley (30), Coventry (42), and Chester (25), are arranged in parallel columns; a list of places and plays in Great Britain, with special designation of those plays the text of which still exists; and some notes on the dialect and grammar.

The limits of this notice forbid any discussion of the subjects treated. It must suffice to note that the authorities of the British Museum consider the handwriting of the MS to date between 1430 and 1450, and Miss Smith fixes upon 1430-40 as its probable date. We have record, however, of the performance of these plays at York in 1378¹ and in 1394, and in 1397 Richard II was present at the festival. Hence these plays existed before 1378, and Miss Smith thinks their composition "may safely be set as far back as 1340 or 1350, not long after the appearance of the *Cursor*." The *Cursor Mundi*, that old metrical version of the Old and New Testament history, both authentic and legendary, with much from the New Testament Apocrypha, is assigned to the early part of the fourteenth century (1300-1320), and Miss Smith says: "It is impossible not to be struck with the general resemblance, in subject and arrangement, between the *Cursor Mundi* and the York cycle of Corpus Plays."

¹ Cf. Wyclif's tract *De Officio Pastoralis*, c. 1378, English Works (E. E. T. Society's ed., p. 429, and note): "and herfore freris han tau3t in englond þe paternoster in engli3sch tunge, as men seyen in þe pley of 3ork."